

CHAPTER 8
PROGRAM EVALUATION

CHAPTER 8

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Section

State Agency Quality Improvement Program (SAQIP)

The Quality of Survey and Certification Activity	8000
The State Agency Quality Improvement Program.....	8001
AQIP Guiding Principles	8002
SAQIP Terminology	8003
Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP).....	8004
Components of an Individual Quality Improvement Plan (IQIP).....	8005

State Agency Quality Improvement Program (SAQIP)

8000. THE QUALITY OF SURVEY AND CERTIFICATION ACTIVITY

One of HCFA's primary goals is to ensure that Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries receive high quality services in a healthy and safe environment. Since it is the State Agency's (SA's) function to oversee the quality of services being furnished through the survey and certification process, continuous quality improvement in the performance of that function is a mutual objective of HCFA and the SAs.

8001. THE STATE AGENCY QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

One way of assuring quality in the oversight of the survey and certification process is through the SAQIP. The SAQIP is a process designed to promote quality and ongoing improvement in survey and certification activities primarily through the development and use of quality improvement plans. SAQIP calls for SA and RO staffs to work together in developing quality improvement plans. In fact, the core of this process is the partnership between the SAs, the ROs, and CO who share the common goal of continuously improving the quality of all aspects of survey and certification activities, including those pertaining to clinical laboratories, in an effort to ultimately improve the quality of health care provided to beneficiaries. Since the process of quality improvement is a continuous one, quality improvement plans will be revised periodically based on findings and changing needs.

The SAQIP is not driven by prescriptive operating instructions and methods of review. Rather, it relies on a set of guiding principles (see §8002) which serves as the foundation for cultivating and maintaining cooperative working relationships between HCFA and the SAs. It depends on the combined knowledge of all partners (i.e., HCFA CO, ROs, and SAs) to guide the process. While a minimum number of core performance standards (i.e., national standards of performance developed with RO/SA input and issued by HCFA CO) have been established for all States, the process allows for the development of additional standards, unique to a State, that will address specific State concerns, problems, or areas of focus. There are no prescribed methods for evaluating performance standards. The focus is on developing and tailoring an Individual Quality Improvement Plan (IQIP) for each performance standard to best address individual State needs and circumstances. An IQIP is a plan designed to assess and improve performance in a particular performance standard. A performance standard is any standard of performance, core or otherwise, that is included in the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) for a State. (See §8004.)

8002. SAQIP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles comprise the framework for establishing and maintaining a working relationship under the SAQIP between HCFA and the SAs:

1. Improving Quality.--The partnership (HCFA/SAs) is committed to improving and protecting the quality of health services provided to beneficiaries.
2. Partnership.--HCFA CO, ROs, and the SAs are a partnership. The SAQIP is one result of the partnership.
3. Strategic Goals.--The SAQIP promotes the achievement of HCFA's strategic goals.
4. Trust/Respect.--Trust is the cornerstone in the foundation of the relationship. Activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

5. Communication/Information.--The partners will share information, openly communicate, and exchange unique experiences, backgrounds, perspectives, and data.
6. Open-Mindedness.--Differences are discussed with open minds while acknowledging that there can be more than one viable way to accomplish objectives.
7. Continuous Quality Improvement.--The partners will identify and promote continuous quality improvement opportunities in survey and certification activities.
8. Education.--Continuing education is essential to the success of the SAQIP and all partners will promote and facilitate this activity.
9. Data.--Data will be utilized to measure performance on an ongoing basis.
10. Individuality.--The partners recognize that each partner has unique characteristics and circumstances which will be considered and addressed within SAQIP.
11. Review Methods.--The partners will cooperatively determine the methods of review and evaluation that will facilitate continuous quality improvement and eliminate unnecessary duplication.
12. Problem Solving.--The partners agree that problems identified both inside and outside of the continuous quality improvement plan will be cooperatively resolved.

8003. SAQIP TERMINOLOGY

The following are definitions for some commonly used SAQIP terms:

1. State Agency Quality Improvement Program (SAQIP) ("say-quip").--The SAQIP supercedes the State Agency Evaluation Program (SAEP). It is characterized by collaboration among SAs, ROs, and CO to evaluate and improve survey and certification activities.
2. Continuous Quality Improvement Program (CQIP) ("see-quip").--The CQIP is an overall plan for monitoring survey and certification activities and promoting continuous improvement in the operations performed by the SA. The plan is developed by the SA in conjunction with the RO and is comprised, at a minimum, of the various Individual Quality Improvement Plans (IQIPs) developed for each core performance standard (CPS).
3. Individual Quality Improvement Plan (IQIP) ("eye-quip").--The IQIP is a plan for monitoring survey and certification activities pertaining to a particular performance standard while promoting continuous quality improvement.
4. Core Performance Standard (CPS).--A CPS is a national standard, developed with input from all partners and issued by HCFA, for which an Individual Quality Improvement Plan is required.
5. Performance Standard (PS).--A PS is a performance standard that is included in a CQIP. This includes the HCFA core performance standards and any additional standards which the SA/RO partnership has included in its CQIP.
6. Goal Performance Level (GPL).--The GPL is the full attainment of, or 100 percent compliance with, a particular performance standard.

7. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Target.--The CQI target is a specific, achievable, interim level of performance for a particular standard which the SA/RO partnership establishes for the current IQIP cycle if experience shows that the goal performance level is not likely to be achieved.

8. Performance Indicator (PI).--A PI is a specific, objective, measurable element of performance. Indicators are the basis for evaluating whether the goals or targets are achieved.

9. Action Plan (AP).--An AP is a plan designed to address problems or facilitate continued quality improvements in response to analyses performed under an IQIP. The AP is an integral part of the IQIP.

8004. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CQIP)

Working in partnership with the RO, each SA designs its own CQIP for ongoing self-assessment. The CQIP is the overall plan for monitoring survey and certification activities and promoting continuous improvement in the operations performed by the SA. The plan is developed by the SA, in collaboration with the RO, and is comprised of the IQIPs for core performance standards (at a minimum) and any additional standards that are established. The IQIPs are designed to assess and improve the SA's performance in a particular standard. While it is recognized that each SA CQIP will reflect that State's own unique structure and needs, frequent contact and discussion with the RO during the development phase will facilitate teamwork and early agreement on plans. Both the SA and the RO will agree on each core performance IQIP prior to its implementation and/or revision.

Each CQIP must include, at a minimum, IQIPS for the quality improvement core performance standards. HCFA Central Office, with input from all partners, will issue these standards, as needed, in order to ensure consistency with program requirements. Any State may establish its own additional performance standards for inclusion in its CQIP. Additional performance standards may also be added to the CQIP if the SA/RO partnership identifies specific performance areas or issues that the SA needs to monitor via an IQIP.

The SA will assess its performance on a periodic basis as detailed in the IQIPs. While the RO retains responsibility for the overall monitoring of all survey and certification activities, the level and nature of its monitoring will be based on review of any Federal Monitoring Survey findings, systems data, CQIP results, as well as any issues, events, or other information warranting further review.

8005. COMPONENTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (IQIP)

A SA can continuously improve performance in a particular area or activity through the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the quality of its performance under an Individual Quality Improvement Plan (IQIP). Monitoring is done through the objective, systematic, and ongoing collection, compilation, and organization of data relating to a particular performance standard. The SA evaluates a performance standard by analyzing the data collected in relation to an expected or desired level of performance. This relationship helps determine the depth of analysis or plan of action which needs to be initiated to continuously improve performance.

Each IQIP includes the following components:

- o Staff responsible for the IQIP activity;
- o Goal and target performance levels;
- o Performance indicators;
- o Data identification, collection, and analyses methods;
- o Action plan formulation; and
- o Action plan implementation .

A. Staff Responsible For Quality Improvement Activities.--Each IQIP identifies the staff having responsibilities for monitoring plan activity for that performance standard.

B. Target and Goal Performance Levels.--

1. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Target.--A CQI target is a specific, achievable level of performance which the SA/RO partnership establishes for a particular standard for the current IQIP cycle. The CQI target is based on historical or baseline data if HCFA has not mandated a target for that standard.

2. Goal Performance Level.--Full attainment of, or 100% compliance with, the core performance standard is the goal performance level.

The intent of the target/goal approach is to improve performance, incrementally, on a continuous basis. As a result, it is important to establish and update CQI targets, which will facilitate continuous improvements until the goal is reached.

C. Performance Indicators (PIs).--Performance indicators are specific, objective, measurable elements of performance. They are used as the basis for evaluating whether the goals or targets are achieved. In establishing the indicators that will be used to measure performance for a particular standard, all pertinent laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and instructions related to the standard should be considered.

D. Data Identification, Collection, and Analysis.--Once the indicators for measuring performance in a particular standard are established, the specific data that will be used to monitor performance are identified, collected, and analyzed. The utilization of pertinent and meaningful data are crucial to an effective IQIP. In determining what data is collected and analyzed, the following questions should be asked and addressed in the IQIP:

1. Data Identification.--

- o What data will be collected to measure the established indicators?
- o Who will identify the data to be used?
- o What are the sources for the data?

2. Data Collection.--

- o Who will collect and maintain the data?
- o How will the data be collected and maintained?
- o How much data will be collected and how often?
- o To whom will the data be given and when?

3. Data Analysis.--

- o How will the data be analyzed (i.e., method or process used)?
- o How often will it be analyzed and by whom?
- o To whom will the written results of the data analysis be reported and when?

E. Action Plan.--The results of the data analysis will be used to determine what action(s) will be taken and to develop an action plan (AP) accordingly. Depending upon the findings, the AP should outline specific steps to improve or enhance performance, to improve the method for measuring performance, or both.

1. Formulating an Action Plan (AP).--The action plan represents an informed judgement about what needs to be changed to improve performance (e.g., a change in procedure(s), additional training) or what needs to be changed in the IQIP to better measure and analyze performance (e.g., a modification of the indicators, data sources, data analysis methods). Specificity in the content of an action plan is very important. Each AP will specify the who, what, when, where, and how of the actions to be taken. Action plans will:

- o Be written;
- o Be realistic and flexible;
- o Include input from staff responsible for implementation;
- o Identify responsible parties for all aspects, including implementation;
- o Contain timeframes for implementation and completion; and
- o Be communicated to those affected and to those responsible for implementation.

2. Implementing an Action Plan.--After an action plan has been developed, it is communicated to those responsible for implementation and to those affected by the AP. An action plan will be monitored, reassessed, and updated as needed. Succeeding IQIP findings will reflect whether, and to what extent, performance improved as a result of implementing the action plan.